

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 25, 2006*

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was unavoidably absent for a portion of the House's proceedings on May 18th and all proceedings on May 19th due to very urgent personal family business.

Had I been present on May 19, for the four votes which occurred during consideration of H.R. 5385, Making appropriations for the military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes:

I would have voted "aye;" on rollcall vote 176—Final Passage;

I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 175—the Blumenauer Amendment;

I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 174—the Rule on H.R. 5385;

I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 173—ordering the "Previous Question"—(Rule on H.R. 5385).

And, Mr. Speaker, had I been present on May 18, for the final five votes which occurred during consideration of H.R. 5386, Making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes:

I would have voted "aye;" on rollcall vote 172—Final Passage—H.R. 5386;

I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 171—the Hefley Colorado Amendment;

I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 170—the Putnam of Florida Amendment;

I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote 169—the Oberstar of Minnesota Amendment;

I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote 168—the Chabot of Ohio Amendment.

## CONGRATULATING INTERNATIONAL FIRE MARSHALS ASSOCIATION

**HON. FRED UPTON**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 25, 2006*

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the members of the International Fire Marshals Association (IFMA), who will be celebrating their 100th anniversary on June 6. I particularly would like to commend Ron Farr, Past President of IFMA and current Fire Chief and Fire Marshall for the Kalamazoo Township Fire Department. I applaud Ron and his courageous colleagues for their tireless efforts to keep our community safe.

Since it was formed in 1906, the men and women of the International Fire Marshals Association have dedicated themselves to saving the lives, homes, and properties of folks throughout our great Nation. Today, the Association has over 1,800 members representing over 20 nations and we are truly grateful for their service here in southwest Michigan.

There is nothing more important to us than the safety of our loved ones, and this organi-

zation has stood watch, protecting the public for the last 100 years. I would like to thank the International Fire Marshals Association and its membership for the continued quality service they provide our community and congratulate them once again on this milestone. We are truly fortunate to have folks like Ron Farr and his colleagues in southwest Michigan, dedicating their lives in the name of public safety.

## HONORING THE MEMORY OF MR. FRED L. MCGHEE

**HON. JO BONNER**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 25, 2006*

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, south Alabama recently lost a friend, dear not only to the Poarch Creek Band of Creek Indians but to the entire State of Alabama. Today, I rise to pay tribute to the memory of Mr. Fred L. McGhee.

Elected first as chairman of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians at the age of 50 in 2000, Fred served honorably and respectfully, bringing cohesion to the Poarch Creek community and the surrounding city of Atmore.

Fred grew up in the close-knit Poarch Creek community in south Alabama and attended the Poarch Consolidated Indian School where his initial love for Native American culture began to germinate. He devoted his time to the intense study of Indian culture as well as historic preservation. Coupled with his previous experience in leading the nine-member Tribal Council, he was the natural fit to be chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in recognizing this beloved member of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. Fred will be greatly missed by his eight sisters; three sons, Greg McGhee of Atmore, Joe McGhee and Fred Lee McGhee, both of Pensacola, Florida; two daughters, Tracy McGhee and Cierra McGhee, both of Atmore; four grandchildren; and friends that he leaves behind. Our thoughts and prayers are with them all during this difficult time.

## ON THE VETERANS IDENTITY PROTECTION (VIP) ACT

**HON. HEATHER WILSON**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 25, 2006*

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I introduce the Veterans Identity Protection (VIP) Act.

On May 3, 2006, a personally-owned computer was stolen from the home of a VA employee. The stolen files contained information that included the names, birth dates, and social security numbers of 26.5 million veterans. This represents data from every military veteran discharged since 1975.

This legislation will ensure that our veterans are made whole as a result of any damages suffered by a veteran as a result of this theft. The VA's mission is to serve and honor our Nation's veterans. We must do more than just provide a call center and put the burden on our veterans to deal with the consequences of this blunder.

This legislation will set up an independent Office for Veterans Identity Theft Claims to receive, process, and pay claims in accordance with this Act.

I am here today to introduce a bill that will ensure that Veterans will be made whole if they are harmed by this release of information without spending years in court and thousands of dollars for lawyers.

## MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

**HON. DANNY K. DAVIS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 25, 2006*

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues that May is Mental Health Month. I would also like to thank those who have dedicated their lives to mental health care.

Now more than ever, we must commit ourselves to full mental health parity. Nearly 30 million Americans suffer from mental health disorders and more than 1 in 5 Americans will experience a mental health disorder in their lifetimes. Many millions suffer from serious, debilitating, and life altering mental disorders such as Alzheimer's and schizophrenia. Nearly every American has friends and relatives that cope with such disorders.

Mental health professionals not only help people with organic mental health disorders, but also help people recovering from traumatic and life changing experiences. Over the last few years, Americans have experienced the trauma of a major terrorist attack and two wars overseas. Tens of thousands of families have experienced firsthand the loss or serious injury of a loved one. Tens of thousands of soldiers who have sustained serious injuries will need assistance adjusting to a life far different than they left. Thousands of American soldiers will return home in need of mental health services related to their combat experiences.

I hope that the Committee on Education and the Workforce will continue to work to ensure that the mental health needs of the elderly are met as we reauthorize the Older Americans Act. The elderly are the most vulnerable to mental health disorders and elderly men are the demographic most to likely commit suicide. Specifically, I want to ensure that senior citizens have access to mental health services in their community or in the same place that they receive primary health care services. I am pleased that we are beginning to make some headway on this important issue.

## HONORING THE IMMORTAL FOUR CHAPLAINS OF THE USS (USAT) "DORCHESTER"

**HON. ERIC CANTOR**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 25, 2006*

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, sacrifice is a common virtue of the U.S. Armed Forces and this Memorial Day we will pause to honor our fallen men and women in uniform. Throughout history, members of the Armed Forces have lost their lives to preserve our freedoms. Sixty-